

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

S E C R E T STATE 222979

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, AR, PARM

SUBJECT: BRAZILIAN AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON AMBASSADOR HILL

REF: BUENOS AIRES 7189

1. OWING TO RENEWED CONCERN OVER NON-PROLIFERATION ISSUE THERE IS INCREASED INTEREST IN THE ARGENTINE AND BRAZILIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAMS. CONVERSATION DESCRIBED REFTEL WAS THEREFORE TIMELY. OWING TO SENSITIVITIES INVOLVED DEPARTMENT BELIEVES U.S. INTERESTS ARE BEST SERVED BY AVOIDING WHAT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS AN ADVERSARY POSITION OVER NUCLEAR QUESTIONS. SUCH A STANCE WOULD PROBABLY BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND THUS FAR THIRD PARTIES SUCH AS CANADIANS AND IAEA APPEAR DETERMINED TO ASSURE THAT ADEQUATE SAFEGUARD GUARANTEES ARE OBTAINED FROM GOA. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT IF GOA AND GOB EXCHANGE INFORMATION

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ON DEVELOPMENTS IN RESPECTIVE NUCLEAR PROGRAMS, THIS WOULD

SERVE TO REMOVE UNFOUNDED MUTUAL SUSPICIONS
OR ILL-CONCEIVED RIVALRY.

2. WE THEREFORE CONSIDER A CALL ON BRAZILIANS BY DCM AND
SCI COUNSELOR/AEC SCIREP COULD BE USEFUL, BEARING IN MIND

OUR GENERAL POSITION AS STATED ABOVE. WE WOULD OF COURSE
BE INTERESTED IN ANY INSIGHTS ON ARGENTINE OR BRAZILIAN
NUCLEAR PLANS WHICH MAY BE OBTAINED IN A LOW-KEY. EMBASSY
IS REMINDED HOWEVER THAT BECAUSE WE HAVE ESSENTIALLY THE
SAME PROBLEMS WITH BRAZIL AS WE DO WITH ARGENTINA IN THE
NUCLEAR FIELD, TOO INTENSIVE QUESTIONING MAY AROUSE
SUSPICIONS.

3. THERE FOLLOW SEVERAL POINTS IN WHICH WE ARE INTERESTED
AND WHICH EMBASSY MIGHT BE ABLE TO PURSUE IN ITS CALL AND
IN SUBSEQUENT LESS FORMAL MEETINGS DEPENDING UPON
PINHEIRO'S FAMILIARITY WITH COMPLEX NUCLEAR MATTERS:

A) THE EXTENT OF ARGENTINA'S SPENT FUEL REPROCESSING
CAPABILITY EITHER INSTALLED OR BEING PLANNED.

B) AMBASSADOR MIGHT BE QUERIED AS TO THE NATURE OF NEW
GERMAN PROCESS CITED IN REFTEL. IF ENRICHMENT, IS THIS
BECKER JET NOZZLE, GAS CENTRIFUGE OR OTHER, OR DOES THE
WORD "PROCESS" REFER TO SOMETHING OTHER THAN URANIUM
ENRICHMENT? FYI: IF ENRICHMENT PROCESS IS BEING
DEVELOPED, WHY WOULD THIS BE DONE IN ARGENTINA WHICH IS
GOING DOWN PATH OF NATURAL URANIUM REACTORS? END FYI

C) ARGENTINE INTENTIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE PURSUIT OF
DEVELOPMENT OF PNE VIS-A-VIS "BOMBS".

D) ARGENTINE PLANS WITH RESPECT TO INSTALL HEAVY WATER
PRODUCTION PLANTS OR THE PURCHASING OF HEAVY WATER.

E) ARGENTINE (OR BRAZILIAN) VIEWS TOWARDS APPLICATION OF
INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS ON THEIR NUCLEAR FACILITIES.

F) DETAILS OF ARGENTINE OFFER TO COOPERATE WITH BRAZIL.
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4. WHILE FURTHER LIGHT ON ABOVE WOULD BE USEFUL, EMBASSY
SHOULD BEAR IN MIND SENSITIVITIES AROUSED BY NUCLEAR
QUESTIONS. INGERSOLL

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